

Chapter 8. SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) PROCEDURES FOR VFR AIRCRAFT

Section 1. GENERAL

8-1-1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAR ACTION

a. The departure station is responsible for SAR action until receipt of the destination station's acknowledgment for the flight notification message. This responsibility is then transferred to the destination station.

b. The National SAR Plan assigns search and rescue responsibilities as follows:

1. To the military agencies for conducting physical search and rescue operations.

2. To the FAA for:

- (a) Providing emergency service to aircraft in distress.

- (b) Assuring that SAR procedures will be initiated if an aircraft becomes overdue or unreported. This is accomplished through the ATC system for IFR aircraft and the flight plan program and/or reports of overdue aircraft received at air traffic facilities for VFR aircraft.

- (c) Attempting to locate overdue or unreported aircraft by INREQ and ALNOT communications search.

- (d) Cooperating in the physical search by making all possible facilities available for use of the searching agencies.

- c. Flight service stations serve as the central point for collecting and disseminating information on overdue or missing aircraft which are not on an IFR flight plan.

- d. ARTCC's serve as the central points for collecting information, coordinating with SAR, and conducting a communications search by distributing any necessary ALNOT's concerning:

1. Overdue or missing IFR aircraft.

2. Aircraft in an emergency situation occurring in their respective areas.

3. Aircraft on a combined VFR/IFR or an airfiled IFR flight plan, and 30 minutes have passed since the pilot requested IFR clearance, and neither communications nor radar contact can be established.

4. Overdue or missing aircraft which have been authorized to operate in accordance with a SVFR clearance.

- e. The ARTCC serves as the contact point for collecting information and coordinating with the RCC on all ELT signals.

8-1-2. OVERDUE AIRCRAFT ON FLIGHT PLAN

Consider an aircraft on a VFR or DVFR flight plan overdue when it fails to arrive 30 minutes after its ETA and communications or location cannot be established.

8-1-3. OVERDUE AIRCRAFT NOT ON FLIGHT PLAN

Consider an aircraft not on a flight plan as overdue at the actual time a reliable source reports it to be at least 1 hour late at destination. Based on this overdue time, apply the same procedures and action times as for aircraft on a flight plan. When such a report is received, verify (if possible) that the aircraft actually departed and that the request is for a missing aircraft rather than a person. Refer missing person reports to the appropriate authorities.

REFERENCE-

Initial Action/QALQ, Para 8-2-1; INREQ, Para 8-3-1; ALNOT, Para 8-4-1.